



Information

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Building a Strong Economy and a Strong Society

The federal government is taking an active role in building a strong economy and a strong society for all Canadians:

- first, by working with Canadians to build a strong economy based on knowledge, learning and innovation that will create more and better jobs as well as higher living standards for Canadians; and
- second, by building a strong society – through preserving and enhancing Canada's health, education and other valued programs – so that all Canadians can participate and benefit from economic growth.

These goals are mutually reinforcing. A strong economy provides Canadians with the opportunity for more and better jobs and generates the revenues needed to maintain and enhance important programs that contribute to a strong society. A strong society provides Canadians with the sense of security that allows them to adjust with confidence to a fast-changing economy. The challenge is for the government to ensure that the quantity of growth Canadians seek contributes to the quality of life they deserve.



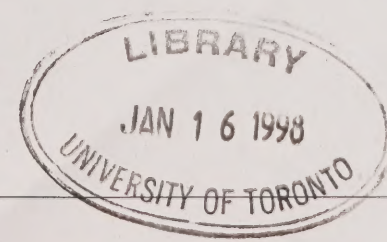
The Growing Role of Knowledge

Canada has attained one of the highest standards of living in the world by transforming an economy based on natural resources to one based on manufacturing and services. Canada's economy is now going through another fundamental change in which the growing use of knowledge, ideas and innovation are increasingly becoming the principal engines of economic growth. While these changes are opening up vast new opportunities, many Canadians are worried that forces over which they have no control might well leave them or their children behind.



Providing Leadership in a Global Knowledge-Based Economy

The federal government believes it has a responsibility to ensure that all Canadians are well equipped to succeed in the global knowledge-based economy. In an era of limited resources, government must be focused. It must work in partnership. It must act only where it can make a difference.



Four areas where the federal government can provide leadership are:

Building a Sound Economic Framework

A sound economic framework is essential for sustained growth. The government is helping build this framework by providing good fiscal and economic management, which helps generate business investment and spending and leads to strong economic growth.

Building Opportunity Through Knowledge and Innovation

Promoting knowledge and innovation throughout the economy is key to ensuring a more positive economic future for Canada. That is why the government will continue, for example, to provide support for research and development; encourage the diffusion of new ideas and technology; help modernize research facilities through the Canada Foundation for Innovation; improve access to the Internet in communities across Canada; and expand trade opportunities through improved access to world markets.

Building Opportunity Through Learning

Education and training are the best tools for helping all Canadians participate and benefit from a growing economy. The federal government believes it must do everything it can to improve access to lifelong learning and retraining opportunities. It already helps Canadian students and their families cope with the rising cost of education. There is much more that can and must be done. For example, the Prime Minister recently announced the creation of the Canada Millennium Scholarship Endowment Fund to reward academic excellence and provide assistance to thousands of low- and moderate-income Canadians.

Building Security Through a Stronger Society

Programs such as health care, education and public pensions not only reflect Canada's values, they are an economic necessity. They provide Canadians with the sense of security that allows them to participate in the economy with confidence. Having confidence in these programs is more important than ever in an era of profound economic change.

The federal government is taking action to help Canadian families give their children a good start in life through a new partnership with the provinces to create a National Child Benefit System.

The government will preserve, protect and improve the health care system and ensure that it meets the needs of the future. It will increase the cash floor of the Canada Health and Social Transfer to the provinces from \$11 billion to \$12.5 billion.

It is acting now to secure the retirement income system so that the seniors of tomorrow will have adequate income when they retire, while assuring today's seniors that their pensions will be protected.